

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

AND

Record of Unitarian Worthies

BEING A HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION OF RELIGION IN EUROPE AND AMERICA
DURING THE LAST THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

With some Account of the most Notable Works written by Unitarians.

No. 1.—VOL. XVIII.]

JANUARY, 1874. [NEW SERIES.—PRICE 1½d.

THE PERFECT LIFE.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

THE universal custom of beginning the year with good wishes for each other's happiness, and of making presents which may in some measure contribute to that happiness, have suggested to us the propriety of addressing a few words at this season to the readers of the CHRISTIAN FREEMAN on the nature and invaluable worth of a posthumous work of the celebrated Dr. Channing, called "THE PERFECT LIFE." Nothing we have read for years has equalled this book, to our minds, for clear, bright religious thoughts, for pure and lofty sentiments, such as make the soul feel it is drinking at the fountain of pious truth. It bears the mind along by easy and pleasant transitions from the level of ordinary life to the highest summit of sublime moods, and on to the love of the practice of what is noblest and best. The book is in reality a call to the life of mankind to come up higher and taste the enjoyment of perfect religious thinking; and in all its arguments and illustrations it is level with the common mind. There is a breadth of feeling and a beauty of expression in almost every page—a simplicity and a grandeur which intensely gratify and charm the reader, so much so that we have felt by a second and third time of reading through the book that there is nothing we can so much desire for our friends everywhere than that they should possess this work, and make it a *gift book* among their friends and families.

We sincerely wish each other happiness; we have an interest in the welfare of one another; it is no idle compliment the phrase we utter to every friend and neighbour, "A HAPPY NEW YEAR." There is an insatiable desire in the human heart for happiness, and our Christian profession leads us daily to do something to add to

the sum of human happiness. The book we are now commending aims all through at this grand result, by leading the mind on to the love of what invariably fills the soul with delight—truth and righteousness. We are made to feel that goodness cherished now is the eternal life and our best happiness entered upon, even here; that the pure mind carries heaven with it, is its own place, and its own reward.

No more eloquent or useful words of Channing have ever been published. It is a compendium of the religious life, with an incessant charm flowing through all its pages; practical in every line, and a useful preservative equally against the corruptions of the world and the corrupt forms of Christianity which still widely prevail. The impression in so many minds that the Christian religion is something else than virtue and holiness—a way to heaven through the merits of another—is very clearly refuted. The value of the Unitarian views of Jesus Christ is forcibly stated. We must all do our best to get this work into the hands of our Trinitarian brethren. It will do our common cause a great service, as the other works of Channing have done. We know right well that the readers of the CHRISTIAN FREEMAN who purchase this book, and make it a study, will say we have done the best thing we could do to give them a happy 1874. We pray them not only to read it themselves, but to circulate it among their friends and neighbours, and everywhere.

The work has been published by Williams and Norgate at *six shillings*. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association has secured the right to publish it for a few weeks at 2s. 6d. per copy, or twenty-five copies for £2 10s. It is a large readable type, on good paper, neatly bound, and carriage free at the above price. Address, at once, H. Brace, 178, Strand, London.

ANOTHER YEAR.

ANOTHER year has emptied itself into the ocean of the past. We are again borne along by the stream, and may be spared to the close of 1874 to say another and another year. But the closing year will come with the final scene of our present life-plans, duties, and pleasures. No time seems better fitted than the days in which we are starting the new journey to survey the past, and to resolve that the year we have entered on shall be spent well. He lives well who lives to repent of the sins of the past and, by the help of Heaven, to buckle on the armour of a new and better life for the future. Every day, as every year, presents some plans of usefulness on which we may enter and show ourselves worthy of the gift of prolonged life.

ANOTHER year is swallowed by the sea
Of sunless waves!

Another year, thou past eternity!
Hath rolled o'er new made graves.

They open yet—to bid the living weep
Where tears are vain;

While they, unswept into the ruthless deep,
Storm-tried and sad, remain.

Why are we spared? Surely to wear away,
By useful deeds,

Vile traces, left beneath the upbraiding spray,
Empty shells and weeds.

But there are things which time devoureth not;

Thoughts whose green youth
Flowers o'er the ashes of the unforget;
And words, whose fruit is truth.

Are ye not imaged in the eternal sea,
Things of to-day;

Deeds which are harvest for eternity,
Ye cannot pass away!

THE SEARCH FOR GOD.

THOMAS HEYWOOD, 1590.

I SOUGHT Thee round about, O Thou my God!
In thine abode,

I said unto the earth, "Speak, art thou He?"
She answered me,

"I am not." I inquired of creatures all
In general

Contained therein; they with one voice proclaim
That none amongst them challenged such a name.

I asked the seas and all the deeps below,
My God to know;

I asked the reptiles and whatever is
In the abyss;

Even from the shrimp to the leviathan
Inquiry ran,—

But in those deserts which no line can sound,
The God I sought for was not to be found.

I asked the air if that were He? but, lo,
It told me, No.

I from the towering eagle to the wren,
Demanded then

If any feathered fowl 'mongst them were such;
But they all, much

Offended with my question, in full choir
Answered, "To find thy God thou must look
higher."

I asked the heavens, sun, moon and stars; but
they

Said, "We obey
The God thou seek'st." I asked what eye or ear
Could see or hear;
What in the world I might descry or know
Above, below?

With an unanimous voice, all these things said,
"We are not God, but we by Him were made."

I asked the world's great universal mass

If that God was?
Which with a mighty and strong voice replied
As stupefied,

"I am not He, O man! for know that I
By him on high
Was fashioned first of nothing, thus inflated,
And swayed by Him by whom I was created."

I sought the Court but smooth-tongued flattery
there

Deceived each ear;
In the thronged city there was selling, buying,
Swearing and lying,—

In the country, craft in simpleness arrayed;
And then I said,

"Vain is my search, although my pains be great,
Where my God is there can be no deceit."

A scrunity within myself I then

Even thus began;
"O man, what art thou?" What more could I
say,

Than dust and clay?
Frail mortal, fading, a mere puff, a blast
That cannot last,—

Enthroned to-day, to-morrow in an urn,
Formed from that earth to which I must return.

I asked myself what this great God might be
That fashioned me?

I answered, the all-potent, solely immense,
Surpassing sense,

Unspeakable, inscrutable, eternal,
Lord over all;

The only terrible, strong, just and true,
Who hath no end, and no beginning knew.

He is the well of life, for He doth give
To all that live

Both breath and being; He is the Creator
Both of the water.

Earth, air and fire; of all things that subsist,
He hath the list;

Of all the heavenly host, or what earth claims,
He keeps the scroll, and calls them by their names.

And now, my God, by thine illumining grace,
Thy glorious face

(So far forth as it may discovered be)
Methinks I see;

And though invisible and infinite
To human sight,

Thou in thy mercy, justice, truth, appearest,
In which to our weak senses thou com'st nearest.

O, make us apt to seek and quick to find
Thou God most kind!

Give us love, hope and faith in Thee to trust,
Thou God most just!

Remit all our offences, we entreat,
Most Good, most Great!

Grant that our willing, though unworthy quest,
May through thy grace admit us 'mongst the
blest.

THE ART OF HAPPINESS.

BLESSED is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it. Labour is life; from the inmost heart of the worker rises his God-given force, the sacred, celestial life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God—from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness—to all knowledge, “self-knowledge,” and much else, as soon as the work fully begins.

Work is of a religious nature—work is of a brave nature, which it is the aim of all religion to be. All work of man is as the swimmer’s; a waste ocean threatens to devour him—if he front it not bravely it will keep its word. By incessant wise defiance of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold how loyally it supports him, bears him as its conqueror along.

“Religion,” I said, for properly speaking all true work is religion; and whatsoever religion is not work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, spinning dervishes, and where it will; with me it shall have no harbour. Admirable was that of the old monks, “*Laborare est orare*—work is worship.”

There is a perennial nobleness and even sacredness in work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works; in idleness alone there is perpetual despair.

Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony the instant he sets himself to work. Doubt, desire, sorrow, remorse, indignation, despair itself, all these, like hell-dogs, lie beleaguering the soul of the poor day-worker, as of every man; but he bends himself with reef valour against his task, and all these are stilled—all these shrink, murmuring, far off into their caves.

Older than all preached Gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable forever enduring Gospel: Work, and therein have well-being. Man, son of earth and heaven, lies there not, in the innermost heart of thee, a spirit of active method, a force for work; and burns like a painfully smouldering fire, giving thee no rest till thou unfold it, till thou write it down in beneficent facts around thee? Wheresoever thou findest disorder, there is thy eternal enemy; attack him swiftly, subdue him, make order of him, the subject not of chaos, but of intelligence, divinity, and thee! But above all, where

thou findest ignorance, stupidity, brute-mindedness, attack it, I say—smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives, but smite, in the name of God!

Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; see thy fellow-workmen there, in God’s eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving; sacred band of immortals, celestial body-guard of the empire of mankind. To thee Heaven, though severe, is not unkind; Heaven is kind, as a noble mother; as that Spartan mother, saying, while she gave her son his shield, “With it, my son, or upon it!” Thou, too, shall return home in honour—to thy far distant home, in honour, doubt it not—if in the battle thou dost keep thy shield!

As to the wages of work, there might innumerable things be said. One thing only I will say here. The wages of every noble work do yet lie in heaven, or else nowhere. Not in Bank of England bills, or any of the most improved establishment of banking and money changing, needst thou, heroic soul, present thy account of earnings. Human banks and labour banks know thee not; or know thee after generations and centuries have passed away, and thou art clean gone from “rewarding.” Nay, at bottom, dost thou need any reward? Was it thy aim and life purpose to be filled with good things for thy heroism, to have a life of pomp and ease, and be what men called “happy” in this world, or in any other world? I answer for thee deliberately, no. The whole spiritual secret of the new epoch lies in this, that thou canst answer for thyself, with thy whole clearness of head and heart, deliberately, no!

My brother, the brave man has to give his life away. Give it, I advise thee; thou dost not expect to sell thy life in an adequate manner. What price, for example, would content thee? The just price of thy life to thee—why, God’s entire creation to thyself, the whole universe of space, the whole eternity of time, and what they hold: that is the price which would content thee; that, and if thou wilt be candid, nothing short of that! It is thy all, and for it thou would have all. Thou wilt never sell thy life, or any part of thy life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart; let the price be nothing; thou hast then, in a certain sense, got all for it. The heroic man—and is not every man, God be thanked, a potential hero?—has to do so, in all times and circumstances.—*Carlyle*.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.—From the day when the disciples left that upper chamber to the present hour, Christians have never been of one accord.—*Duke of Somerset.*

TRUE CONVERSION.—A little maid of all work, once upon a time was heard to say that she had been "converted." "But how do you know that you have been converted?" somebody asked. "Oh, I know," she answered; "because I sweep under the mats now."

KICKS OR KISSES.—Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, "Greet the brethren with a holy kiss." But the sects of Christendom have hitherto treated each other as if the command were, "Greet the brethren with a holy kick." Is it not time for kicks and cuffs to cease awhile, that we may try what virtue there is in kiss and caress to establish good living?

ORDINATION OF BELL RINGERS.—The Rev. N. Jackson, vicar of Over, thus solemnly sets apart the bellringers of his Church:—"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by virtue of my office as vicar of Over, I give thee authority to ring bell No. — to the glory of God." It is a solemn thought what might have become of this man if he should so far forget himself as to ring some other bell than bell No. — to the glory of God.

A YEAR'S TROUBLES.—Sometimes I compare the troubles we have to undergo in the course of a year to a great bundle of faggots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole at once. He mercifully unties the bundles, and gives us first one stick which we are able to carry to-day, and then another which we are able to carry to-morrow, and so on. This we might easily manage, if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day; but we choose to increase our trouble by carrying yesterday's stick over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load before we are required to bear it.—*John Newton.*

A BRAHMO ON CHRISTIANITY.—At the Brahmo meeting on the 5th of March, 1873, Babu Bose read a paper "On the Claims of Christianity," &c. He said, "Hinduism inculcated the existence and attributes of the Deity in a manner not surpassed by any other religion, while Christianity gave a clear insight into the real state of the soul, taught men to look into their sins, and also held out the grace of God as the only way of salvation. *The idea of organising a Church on higher spiritual grounds belonged to Christianity alone.*" The lecturer showed how the spirit of Hinduism and Christianity had developed the religion of the Brahmo Soma].

THE NAME UNITARIAN.—How careful, at present, our orthodox brethren are, not to use the word Unitarian, as they know it indicates one of the greatest theological facts of the present day. A distinguished bishop discoursing the other Sunday, when pointing out the dangers to which many Churchmen are exposed, referred by name to Roman Catholicism, but when he pointed out the tendency to Unitarianism he left out the word. So a Church journal that speaks of the future of the English Church, says "when the day of disruption shall come, the High Church will drift to Rome, the Low Church to the simplicity of dissent, and the Broad Church to the Lord knows whither." It need not have said "the Lord knows whither," but plainly "the Broad Church to the Unitarians."

COMPULSORY BAPTISM.—The *Boston* (Lincolnshire) *Guardian* must have the honour of the joke of recommending the Church party in the School Boards to propose, not compulsory education, but compulsory baptism as a better way to regenerate the nation.

DO UNITARIANS ERR?—We may indeed; but if so we err with the greatest disciples of philosophy and of Christianity. We err with Milton, who rose with an angel's wing to heaven, and soared out of sight amid the music of his grateful piety. We err with Locke, whose pure philosophy taught him to adore its Source—whose warm love and genuine liberty was never chilled into rebellion against its Author. We err with Newton, whose starlike spirit shot athwart the darkness of the spheres to reascend too soon to the home of his nativity. We err with Franklin, the patriot of the world, the playmate of the lightning, the philosophy of liberty, whose electric touch thrilled through the two hemispheres. It is with men like these that we share the error.—*Phillips.*

THE WEAKNESS OF POPERY.—Mr. Hale says, in "Old and New":—"The material resources of the Roman See are weaker than ever. At the moment when, like Nebuchadnezzar, the Pope proclaimed himself infallible as God, the lightning struck him, as in the play it strikes the Eastern king. And he fell from the throne. "He was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him." But, side by side with this loss of physical power, the myriad servants of that See, its wise men and magicians, are at work with more assiduity than ever. They are putting every stumbling-block which they can lift or roll in the way of free institutions. In Spain and France they seem successful; in Switzerland, and Prussia, and Hungary, they seem to fail; in Italy and Austria the balance hangs more even."

CROSSING THE RIVER.—A Christian man was dying in Scotland. His daughter Nellie sat by his bedside. It was Sunday evening, and the bell of the Scotch kirk was ringing, calling the people to church. The good old man, in his dying dream, thought that he was on his way to church, as he used to when in his sleigh across the river; and as the evening bell struck up, in his dying dream he thought it was the call to church. He said: "Hark, children, the bells are ringing, we shall be late; we must make the mare step out quick!" He shivered, and then said: "Pull the buffalo robe up closer, my lass! It is cold crossing the river, but we will soon be there!" And he smiled and said: "Just there now!" No wonder he smiled. The good old man had gone to church. Not to the old Scotch kirk, but to the temples in the skies. Just across the river. How comfortably did God hush that old man to sleep! As one whom his mother comforteth, so God comforted him.—*Talmage.*

The following are the terms for supplying the RECORD OF UNITARIAN WORTHIES, post free:—

	s.	d.
1 copy, per year	2	0
2 copies " " " " " " " "	3	6
3 " " " " " " " "	5	6
5 " " " " " " " "	6	0

Communications for the editor to be addressed to the Rev. R. SPEARS, 73, Angell-road, Brixton, London.

Printed by SAMUEL TAYLOR, Graystoke-place, Fetter-lane, London, and Published by EDWARD T. WHITEFIELD, 178, Strand, London.